

THE TEACHING MINISTRY
FOR TOMORROW

BENJAMIN WISNER BACON

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**The Teaching Ministry
for Tomorrow**

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JAMES WESLEY COOPER
OF THE CLASS OF 1865, YALE COLLEGE



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The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

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THE present volume is the fifth work published by the Yale University Press on the James Wesley Cooper Memorial Publication Fund. This Foundation was established March 30, 1918, by a gift to Yale University from Mrs. Ellen H. Cooper in memory of her husband, Rev. James Wesley Cooper, D.D., who died in New York City, March 16, 1916. Dr. Cooper was a member of the Class of 1865, Yale College, and for twenty-five years pastor of the South Congregational Church of New Britain, Connecticut. For thirty years he was a corporate member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and from 1885 until the time of his death was a Fellow of Yale University, serving on the Corporation as one of the Successors of the Original Trustees.

Preface

At Yale Divinity School it has been customary for many years to invite the graduates and the clergy of the state to an annual Convocation, or joint session of students, clergy, and public, to hear addresses on topics of religious interest. Among the lectures given there is, besides such well-known courses as the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching and the Nathaniel W. Taylor Lectures on Theology, an Alumni Lecture given by some graduate of the School who is selected annually for the purpose. The topic treated is left to the lecturer.

On the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the School as a separate department of the University, celebrated October 23-25, 1922, Convocation exercises were combined with the Centennial Celebration. The Alumni Lecturer appointed for this occasion was the present author, a graduate of the School in 1884 and since 1897 Buckingham Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation in the same institution.

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

He chose as his topic *The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow*, esteeming this as the subject best adapted to the occasion and to the audience addressed. As men preparing for or actually members of the Protestant ministry, many of his hearers were to be regarded as specially concerned, for reasons developed in the address. And that part of the public which attended the Convocation did so from sympathy with the Divinity School—with its educational work of the hundred years past and of the indeterminate number of years to come. For this part of the audience, too, the problem discussed was a matter of vital interest. The response evoked from all the elements represented in the audience, and even from some elements outside it, was so great and so long continued as to make republication advisable. The Yale University Press, with the cordial approval of the Council's Committee on Publications, of Yale University, undertook this work. The author gladly accedes to their request that he supply the material in the form in which it was originally delivered.

It was necessary to choose between recasting the material entirely, in a form possibly

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

better adapted to the interests and needs of the general public, and depending upon the public to enter sympathetically into the spirit of the very special occasion for which the original form was prepared. The latter choice seemed the wiser, even though it require a certain imaginative readjustment on the part of the reader. This, the author hopes, will be cheerfully granted.

The problem here dealt with is of much more than local or temporary interest. It can be solved only by the broadest and most hearty cooperation by all kinds and classes of Christian people. Shall Christian education continue to be, as heretofore in our land, the joint work of Church and University, or shall these two institutions henceforth be divorced? In urging upon the public the considerations stressed in the present address, the author asks only that they be weighed in terms of their intrinsic merits. If in consequence the cause of Christian education, freedom, and enlightenment be in any degree advanced, he that sowed and they that reap will rejoice together.

B. W. BACON.

New Haven, February 21, 1923.

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

PROTESTANT ministers cannot but be deeply concerned with the problem of Religious Education. Always vital, the question is doubly critical for our times because the American principle of the separation of Church and State has suddenly attained to almost world-wide control, and carries with it a new and formidable responsibility. The chief factor in religious education will never cease to be home training, Christian nurture. If this fail the case is indeed deplorable for the maintenance of personal character and even of civic virtue. But whether parents of today are, or are not living up in this respect to the standards of the past, there is a wider field. If the social order is to be conserved, our citizenship as a whole must be infused with those moral and religious principles which are essential to a Christian civilization. The separation of

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

Church and State involves the assumption by the Church, unaided by the State, of this grave responsibility. For a time we quieted an uneasy conscience with well-deserved encomiums on the high-minded, devoted teachers of our public schools. Surely, we said, a half-hour under volunteer instruction in the Sunday school once a week will suffice to supplement the public school. There is no danger. But our Roman Catholic fellow citizens, themselves quite ready to face the issue, have forced us to logical consistency. The public school and state university have increased to relatively enormous proportions. In the forming of the character of our citizenship their influence is beyond calculation. But it has been completely secularized by force of law. Are we ready to face the consequences?

As Protestants we believe in the right of private judgment. The loss of it would be equivalent, we know, to ecclesiastical despotism. But we dare not trust an unenlightened private judgment. That way lies the worse disaster of fanaticism, credulity, superstition. The inference is inevitable. As Americans, who accept the constitutional principle for-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

bidding all forms of religious establishment, we acquit the State of responsibility for religious training. We assume it for the Church.

Graduates of Yale inherit a traditional responsibility in this matter, especially if they be graduates of that School which one hundred years ago was set apart as its special custodian. Yale Divinity School derives its task not from the days of Bushnell only, but from those of Edwards as well. This anniversary marks another stage in the undertaking to train men for "publick service in Church and Civil State." The retrospect of these two hundred and twenty years invites a forward look, a demand whether the principles of Protestantism and Americanism have met the test of time, and if so in what manner they should be applied in the hundred years to come.

Strident voices of protest are raised. Not Catholics alone but Protestants also are denouncing our secularized system of public education as spiritually and morally destructive. There is open demand for return to the medieval dictatorship of dogma. Training for the ministry is in a chaotic condition. Leading seminaries, founded by the churches in dis-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

trust of the university, are now denounced by large groups among these same churches as themselves hotbeds of heresy. Smaller institutions are multiplying under denominational control. No end appears in sight until each sect and propaganda has obtained a training school for its own clergy or missionaries, and where possible a denominational college besides. Some even have already the equivalent of the Roman Catholic parochial school, where parents of sufficient wealth, or sufficient anxiety to find tutors and guardians of guaranteed ecclesiastical regularity to free themselves from responsibility, can place their boys from the age of twelve;—yes, or ten; or eight!

Perhaps the most systematic, consistent and philosophical exponent of this type of reaction is the Anglican apostle of dogma, Dr. Charles Harris, for many years a teacher of philosophy at Oxford, now examining chaplain for the Bishop of Llandaff. In his recent work entitled *Creeds or No Creeds*, Dr. Harris demands explicitly, as the only safeguard against a ruinous modernism, that we Protestants build up again the things that we destroyed in claiming the right of private

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

judgment. We must return, he says, to the principle of Vincent of Lérins of the immutability of dogma. Philosophy and theology have gone astray together since Kant introduced the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge; since development in the sense of addition to religious knowledge was admitted to be possible. The faith "once for all delivered" is unchangeable. It cannot be altered or augmented. It must be defended. The creeds of the first six centuries were made for the purpose of excluding heretics. Let every individual, lay or cleric, who refuses assent to them "in the identical sense intended by their authors" be cast out as no Christian. Dr. Harris is vigorous and rigorous in his logic, but he is very far from being an ignoramus, and I do not think he wishes to be called a Romanist. His book is the most systematic and consistent arraignment known to me of the whole development of Christian thought under Protestant principles.

If we are concerned for the training of the ministry, the history of the institution whose centennial we are celebrating contains a sufficient answer to the question whether it should be controlled by the dead hand of creeds, or by

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

the living spirit of Christian devotion immersed in, but not submerged by, the general stream of contemporary civilization and culture. A hundred years of faith in the guidance of Light and Truth has not led Yale men to distrust the influence of a university atmosphere.

But what shall we say to the larger problem? It is not enough that the ministry be free. Under Protestant polity the laity also must be free, else we shall soon find the whole body, clergy and laity together, "entangled again in a yoke of bondage." The people as a whole, within and without the Church, must be "no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error." Our churches were founded as brotherhoods of free men, and nothing can keep them in this freedom save the truth, and capacity to find it. Our Christian civilization assumes a like inheritance. It cannot endure half bond and half free—in religion, slaves; in politics, free men. For a Christian industrial order, a Christian social order, a Christian civilization, there must be religious education not in

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

subservience to dogma, but in enlightenment and discipline of the mind.

Revolt from the tyranny of dogma has led many to distrust the Church as an agent for education. What else, they ask, can one expect from the Church but dogmatism? And dogmatism means the enfeeblement, perhaps the suppression of thought, rather than its encouragement and discipline. But it was not through the influence of Jesus and Paul, nor of the great Reformers, that the Church gained such a reputation. If I plead for education in the hands of the Church, it is a Church that follows such leaders as these, not the apostles of dogma. And if not to the Church, to whom or what will you entrust this great and growing problem? Man has been discovered to be "incurably religious." Grant for argument's sake that the tendency is not uplifting, but the reverse. Say that all religious beliefs are superstitions, and differ only as to quality. What then? Irreligion is a mere unstable vacuum. If you merely cast out one evil spirit of belief, you leave the house swept and garnished, inviting invasion from seven other demons worse than the first. You do not cure a man of credulity by disproving his fa-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

vorite superstition. If he reluctantly gives up the ouija board, he builds his faith on ektoplasm. If he forsakes St. Anne de Beaupré, it is only to worship at the shrine of Mrs. Eddy. You cannot eradicate the religious instinct. You can only school and discipline it. But if so, how, and under what auspices? I grant you that a Church whose idea of schooling and discipline of the mind in matters concerning religion is only the imposition of dogma is not a fit instrument to discharge this trust. But is that the only kind of Church we know? And if not the Church, to what other agency shall we turn against the wild chaos of superstition and credulity sure to supervene when this function of man's nature is neglected? Is there not already quite evidence enough of a populace that in these matters are still children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine? Our New England forefathers set school and college alongside the Church to guard their descendants against "the perils of an illiterate ministry." Doubtless the college as they founded it was one-sided, only a kind of theological university. But at least in one of their great foundations a duty was also acknowledged to "civil state."

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

Let Abraham Lincoln be our witness how that duty was performed by a band of eight men from Yale Divinity School for Lincoln's home state of Illinois.

The churches of America have not yet worked out their problem. They have developed the seminary system for the training of the ministry, and to a large degree are reacting from the original tendency away from the university. But the conditions in this field are still nothing less than chaotic, they tend to indefinite multiplication of what the business man would call "wildcat" institutions. In 1914 in an address before the Religious Education Association, Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, a superlative authority on the higher education in America, gave data to show that the appalling conditions revealed by the Flexner report in the domain of medical education were more than paralleled in that of training for the ministry. The business of theological charlatanism had even then already surpassed that of medical charlatanism, victimizing a helpless public by pretensions on which no competent authority had passed. It is true the vampires that prey upon the weaknesses of the human soul are usually not

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

conscious of their own incapacity. Far from it; the rule is, the greater the ignorance the greater the self-confidence. But most medical quacks could make the same plea of self-delusion. It does not make them less dangerous to the public, but more so. A canvass of the situation in regard to theological seminaries has recently been made by the interdenominational Council of Church Boards of Education. The statistics are now available. How much will be made public depends on how much the churches feel able to stand in the way of humiliating revelations. It is enough to say that apart from the sobering influence of the university, and free from the dogmatic control of a papal consistory, Protestant training for the ministry is in danger of becoming (if it has not already become) a "wildeat" industry.

And this is far from being the most serious element in the situation. The emergency is great and obvious. Consequently every sort of nostrum is already in the field. The stronger churches continue to fill their pulpits from sources of adequate training. But the weaker (and they are vastly more numerous) are served by such material as can be picked up

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

by committees not too well able to resist the charms of the self-advertising religious spell-binder. And what of the still larger public outside the churches, whose notion of religion is derived from Pastor Russell and the sensational press? There are short-cuts to our pulpits, Sunday schools and Y. M. C. A. classrooms from personally conducted "Bible Institutes" and similar organizations which are turning out practitioners by the wholesale against a dwindling stream from the legitimate institutions, institutions whose more thorough training the "wildcat" organizations of course decry. These are the conditions of religious education in Protestant America, the New World opened up for a free and growing Christianity.

Were it possible for reaction against irreligion in our institutions of higher learning to carry us in America to the length of a divorce of Church from university even to the degree manifest in Protestant Germany, to say nothing of the avowed purpose of our Roman Catholic fellow citizens, the disaster would be greater than we can well conceive. As Yale men we stand committed to supreme effort to avert it. Time forbids that I should

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

attempt again to define the educational principle for which Yale stands both as University and in its School of Divinity. The record of these hundred years is a vindication of the principle so far as the training of ministers is concerned. It is perhaps even more conspicuously vindicated in the history of ministerial training at our sister university at Cambridge. One may lay the blame where one will for the fateful schism which led the churches of Massachusetts to withdraw this trust from the college and commit it to the seminary on Andover Hill. Perhaps the churches were too unprogressive. Perhaps the ideal cherished by the college was too scholastic, too lacking in the evangelic note. At all events, we rejoice at the present prospect of a healing of the breach. This year one of the most distinguished of our younger graduates goes to the presidency of Harvard-Andover. His task will be to renew the old Puritan ideal in the alliance of Church and university and prove the needlessness of a fratricidal warfare of science and religion. Willard Sperry brings us the congratulations of Harvard's Department of Theology. They are the more welcome because our ideals are so closely kin. They are

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

reciprocated from our hearts. Be it our rivalry henceforth to see which of these historic schools shall do the most *pro Christo et ecclesia*.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
Yet more of reverence in us dwell,
That faith and truth according well
May make one music as before, but vaster.

As we look back over the hundred years now past it is natural that our minds should at first be preoccupied with religious education in the narrower sense of training for the ministry, and perhaps that we should congratulate ourselves a little that here at Yale the old Puritan tradition of the alliance of Church and university was preserved without a break. If we are in this mood of self-congratulation, then it is high time that we awaked out of sleep and realized the urgent responsibility for the future. We must face the older, wider needs, the need for which in our reorganization twelve years ago we sought to make some provision in a special department for religious education. The need of the hour is not merely that our clergy shall be men of university training themselves, but

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

that there shall be trained men, lay or clerical, able to confront the tremendous task of religious education for the people, both within and outside the churches.

“Democracy in the Church” has been the noble watchword of Protestantism, nowhere more nobly exemplified than in its New England development. But what becomes of democracy without popular enlightenment? I have referred to one of our more distinguished graduates of recent years. Let me refer to another, whose inaugural address as president of Colgate University was published a few days ago. If the published report be correct, President Cutten despairs of democracy itself, because the dissemination of knowledge seems to him such a hopeless task. Fortunately wisdom and common sense are not always lacking to the ignorant, any more than they are always given to the learned. Dissemination of knowledge is difficult, but is it hopeless? Russia and China are sufficient examples for one generation of the difficulty of maintaining real freedom without education and popular enlightenment. The road from popular liberty to the dictatorship of the proletariat is broad and easy and leadeth to

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

destruction, and many there be that take it. Strait is the gate and narrow the way of freedom. Knowledge and enlightenment are its price, eternal vigilance its guardian. In affairs of the State we know and admit this as an axiom, because we have seen and suffered the political consequences of popular ignorance. Our fathers had some idea of the parallel truth in the domain of religion. They had seen and suffered some of the consequences of religious ignorance and folly. They eagerly sought and found escape from the tyranny of the State over the Church. But they did not expect to enjoy this liberty in exemption from the price of all liberty. They did not cherish the delusion that the religious instinct could safely be left to run wild, that one could simply eliminate religion from all forms of education and expect a generation to grow up sound in moral health, strong in those ideals which make for the stability of the commonwealth.

The abandonment of education to an artificially secularized State has not as yet produced its natural fruits in this country, because we still run the majority of our schools and colleges according to traditions

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

inherited from a more religious past. The school teacher in most of our towns and villages is personally an ally of the Church. The atmosphere of the school is still in a general way Christian, even if the school board reluctantly accedes to the demand of our Jewish fellow citizens and forbids the teaching of Christmas carols, and our Romanists prevent the reading of the Bible. We have not yet come to the situation of France, where the village school teacher (who is usually town clerk and general representative of the government) is expected to eradicate religion and all its superstitions from the mind of youth. The only dangers immediately apparent on our educational horizon are an enormous increase of utilitarianism and indifference to religious ideals. Our academic anti-Semites would probably call this the Hebraizing of our educational system. The term would be justified if you subtract from the Hebrew character all those elements which have given it for centuries an unrivaled claim to the admiration of the world, and retain those which justly or unjustly make the term "Jewish" a reproach. For my part I would like to see Yale one hundred per cent Jewish in those char-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

acteristics which led our Puritan forefathers to give Hebrew names to their children, and as completely free from Judaism of the other type as the Yale of the eighteenth century was free from actual Jewish blood. The tendency of the times in committing more and more of education to a secularized, commercialized, and avowedly utilitarian State is to make all our institutions of learning "Jewish" in a far worse than racial sense. What a wonderful solution of the problem of the Jewish influx if we simply made our universities a little more Christian! One cannot indeed say in this case "Christianity has never been tried." But in view of their past experience one might expect the controlling powers of some of our chartered institutions whose endowments leave them free from all dictation by the State to avoid becoming Jewish by becoming a little more Christian.

Thus far I have passed over lightly a factor of more significance to the problem of religious education than is commonly attached to it in academic circles, the movement self-styled Fundamentalism. This is the Protestant "bull against modernism." For papal authority it substitutes bibliolatry, champion-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

ing against the teaching of evolution in our schools and colleges, and the methods of historical criticism and interpretation applied to the Bible in our divinity schools, a doctrine of Scripture which its supporters believe to be Christian, but which in reality is merely pre-Christian, pagan and Jewish. The pitiful battle against scholarship will soon collapse. The sun will not stand still, nor twentieth-century thought return to medieval dogma at the command of W. J. Bryan. But this is not all of Fundamentalism. It has a larger significance than its noisiest champions know. Deep under the surface sweeps a tide of protest against irreligion in our educational system as a whole, and an indictment against that conception of Christianity which repeats the error of the Judaizers in the days of Paul, the error against which he held up "the word of the cross" as embodying the central message of the faith. Before I take up again the larger problem of religious education in home and school, I must pause for a brief consideration of "liberalism," technically so called, a conception of Christianity, which as laying all stress upon the ethical teaching of Jesus as the essence of the message is naturally re-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

ceived with favor even by progressive representatives of the synagogue.

Let us turn briefly to this charge against the typical divinity school. Theologians understand what is meant by the expression "the 'liberal' Christ." For the benefit of others less familiar with our technical terms let me explain that it stands for a theory which had great vogue for a time in academic circles, but against which the verdict of historical criticism is (I think) decisive. This theory takes what it calls the gospel *of* Jesus, His preaching of repentance and forgiveness, the new ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, as the essential thing in Christianity, and discounts the gospel *about* Jesus preached to the world after His death. It looks upon Paul and his stressing of the cross and its psychological reaction in Paul and others which they called the resurrection as an aberration. It explains the worship of Jesus as having arisen partly from Jewish messianism, partly from the prevailing Oriental mystery-cults with their myths of a dying and rising Savior-god. The Galilean disciples were deluded by their dreams of an apocalyptic Son of Man-messiah into the expectation of an impending return

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

of their Teacher on the clouds of heaven. Paul Hellenized this apocalyptic hope into an avatar doctrine of incarnation and mystic union with divinity.

On the surface this makes a plausible explanation of the rise of Christianity. At least it removes some stumblingblocks. Relegate to the background the story of the cross and resurrection, retaining as the only permanent elements of the gospel the moral and religious teaching of Jesus (an idealistic ethic only needing expansion from its local and temporary adaptation) and you get a product to which neither Jew nor Agnostic will seriously object. It is a sermon on these lines, with a text from the Gospel of Luke, that you take with you when you exchange with the rabbi of the liberal synagogue, or the leader of the Ethical Society. But if you should through some mischance enlarge upon one of those "great texts in Galatians" that proclaim the gospel *about* Jesus as the author of a new way of salvation by grace, then be not surprised to find that it entails twenty-nine distinct damnations, one sure if another fails.

The historical critic finds difficulty with the "liberal" Christ. As matter of plain fact

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

Christianity did not arise out of the admiration felt either by Paul or the Galilean disciples for Jesus as a teacher. Indeed, they scarcely mention the fact that He was a teacher, still less consider that He presented a new system of ethics. Christianity arose out of what men believed to be the act of God, not the teaching of any man, however great. Whether it were Paul, or those who were apostles before him, the common message was simply "the word of the cross." If some slurred this, then the resurrection. In either case, the act of God. God meant something to humanity by what happened in Jerusalem in the year 30. The apostles were witnesses of something that God had done, things that they had seen and heard. That was their "gospel." Of course they had to attach a significance to these experiences, and from the nature of the case they sought it in Scripture. That was their theology. The first clause of their primitive creed was that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." The second (also "according to the scriptures") was that God had raised Him from the dead, to bring redemption to the world. That is not ethics. That is religion. A religion grows out of what

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

men think God does. The thought may be wrong or right, or partly one, partly the other; but without it there is no religion. With it there is sure to be, unless the action falls altogether outside human interest. Ethics is a theory of human conduct. You may give it dynamic by incorporating the sanctions of religion. But of itself ethics remains a mere philosophy of conduct, a sociological theory of what men ought to do. Christianity is, and always has been, a religion. It adapted to its needs a very noble system of ethics, but it grew out of certain great occurrences interpreted in a certain way as acts of God. The historical critic knows this, and therefore finds the mere ethical teacher, the "liberal Christ," a cause utterly inadequate to account for the rise of the religion.

The difficulty felt by the plain old-fashioned Christian with "liberalism" in this technical sense of the word is not altogether different. He does not argue like the critical historian. He simply realizes that somehow the life is gone out of the old gospel. The "word of the cross" meant to him "the blood atonement" in something like the sense it bore to Anselm and Calvin. Christianity to him was not a phi-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

losophy of conduct, nor good advice lit up with emotion. It was a gospel, news of what God has done confirmed by experience of what God does. It worked.

Both as a historical critic and as an evangelical I confess that my sympathies are with the Fundamentalist in his insistence on "the efficacy of the blood-atonement." My own interpretation of the cross and its meaning would probably be very unsatisfactory to the Fundamentalist, but in so far as his indictment holds against any theological seminary that it teaches this modern form of the Judaizing heresy miscalled "liberalism" instead of Paul's conception of our ministry as "a ministry of the atonement, how that God through the agency of Christ was restoring the world to his favor, not reckoning unto men their trespasses," I deplore it as taking the heart out of the gospel, depriving Christianity of the right to be called a religion. In theology we need to raise the war-cry, "Back to Paul."

But what of the indictment which the Fundamentalist brings against our secularized schools and colleges of "aggressive irreligion," and what of his remedy? Once more I hold Fundamentalism to be important as a

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

protest, not as a program. Fundamentalism is symptomatic of a profound misgiving, a realization that times are changed, coupled with a frantic determination that we shall not change with them. Whether the sweeping indictments brought by some against the morality of the younger generation have just ground or not I do not know. Certainly there has come a sudden realization that the ancient sanctions have crumbled away. It is no longer enough to say "The Bible teaches thus and so; therefore obey." Reward and punishment in a world to come have lost their appeal. It may not be true that men and women will give up the struggle for righteousness because this is so. But it is inevitable that a generation which believed its own moral principle had no more enduring basis should anticipate this result in the generation that comes after.

On the constructive side Fundamentalism is weak. It has no remedy to offer save an impossible return to the past. It would reinstate an obsolete theory of verbal inspiration which is not even Christian, and an expectation of the visible and immediate return of Christ to judge the world which Christianity had already begun to outgrow in the time of Paul,

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

and which it had largely discarded before the close of the second century. Who, then, is to blame for this backwardness? Is it reasonable to expect the average layman to inform himself on the results of a century of biblical science, and the revolution wrought in the science of interpretation by historico-critical methods, when the clergy (so far as they are themselves informed) treat this knowledge as too dangerous for common use, and think it the part of prudence to put off change to the last possible moment? Hearken, ye pastors of churches! I know your timidity in this matter is not based on self-interest. It is based on genuine regard for the interest of the Church as a whole, and especially in regard for the weak brother whose crutches you fear to take away. But when I note the difference between the superstitious and pagan ideas of Scripture represented in this movement and those which the least progressive of you who have really studied the subject entertain, I am forced to ask whether you have indeed done your duty as a teaching ministry. Was it really necessary that there should be such deplorable ignorance of the fruits of more than a century of devout scientific research? Was

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

it necessary that the whole regiment should be put on crutches out of consideration for the feelings of the lame? We knew that the Bible could be made a new book, renewed in reality, in vividness, in redemptive power, by treating it as the source-book for a record of God's redemptive self-manifestation. That was shown even in things beyond dispute. And most of us were too timid, or too inert, to let the new light shine forth. Now the crisis is upon us. There should have been, this half-century past, cooperative work between the churches and the university, or at least between the churches and the divinity school, for religious education worthy the name, worthy the respect of the scientific world. And today we face the overwhelming task and are appalled.

Fundamentalism is the rebound of our own neglect. What else could we anticipate? The churches have their full share of mental inertia. Where is the manufacturer that is not in despair over the constant changes desired by the patentee? Just as he had everything standardized for production in quantity, along comes the inventor demanding a new and better model. Do you think the Vincentian

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

principle of the immutability of dogma has no human side? Let me relate a personal experience. Twenty-two years ago I sold to the publishers for a very modest sum an *Introduction to the New Testament*. Its merits were not great, but sufficient to induce the public to buy up all the copies printed, so that for several years it has been impossible to obtain them for my classes. A few years after publication I asked the privilege of making a few corrections in the plates before a new printing should take place. In vain. Corrections are costly. If the public will buy the book as it is, why change it? More years passed. I begged the privilege of preparing a new and improved edition. Ah, no! The sale was still going strong. Some things could admittedly be bettered; but why change, when all the market would absorb could be printed off the old plates without additional cost?

Take a larger instance in matters far more vital. The amazing dominance of the so-called Received Text of the New Testament against all that scholarship could do to correct undeniable errors will bear out my contention that the practical religionist dislikes improvements in theology. If the Bible of St. James

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

was good enough for the apostles, it is good enough for him. He has tried it and it works. He has the whole way of salvation underscored in it in red ink, with references in the margin. Anathema on changes of text! But what was the so-called Receptus, which for two hundred years frustrated the attempts of biblical scholars to give the world the readings of better manuscripts than those used by Erasmus? Purely and simply a publisher's convenience. In 1633 the brothers Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir, the famous Leyden publishers, introduced a new edition of the Greek New Testament originally prepared by Erasmus. In the preface they introduced this characteristic advertising claim: *Textum ergo habes nunc ab omnibus receptum, in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*. "This text has now been universally accepted. In it we offer something absolutely free from change or corruption."²

At least as obsolete as the Received Text is the theology of the Fundamentalists. But it has worked. It still works wherever modernism has not undermined it. It proudly claims the motto *semper eadem*, and declares itself "unchanged" since the time of Augustine and

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

Anselm, though what Augustine and Anselm would say to the claim is another question. It works. But it does not follow that a really scholarly and truly modern theology would not work much better. In Wesley's day the "old-time religion" was high Calvinism. People believed you could get real power out of that. And indeed you could while an Edwards could preach the Enfield sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." But try the Enfield sermon on your own congregation next Sunday and note the effect. Arminianism was new and heretical in Wesley's time. The conservatives thought of it as cutting the nerve of evangelism because it did not limit men to a single probation. But somehow the Wesleys, in spite of their unorthodox, weakening theology, did manage to put some life into religion. Who, pray, were the practical evangelists of the eighteenth century? And where did they get their training? The Wesleys were university men who had a message of live religion and delivered it. They were heralds of "the word of the cross."

Gentlemen, we are not thinking today in terms of one denomination, but of all. We are not thinking in terms of a few years, or of a

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

few decades, but of centuries. If words of criticism used but now concerning our common failure to meet the great task imposed by Protestant principles on the Protestant churches seem unfair to any particular denomination, or any particular individual, let it be remembered that the terms are extremely sweeping and general. If the coat does not fit this one and that one, let him not put it on. But am I not right in my definition of the great issue of the times? Is it not true that the freedom won by the Reformers is endangered without enlightenment? Is it not true that the separation of Church and State places this responsibility upon the Church? Is it not true that we have alarming symptoms that the work is ill done? Is it not true that the past century of biblical scholarship has made new light to break forth from the Scriptures through historical interpretation? And is it not also true that so far from completing the democracy of the Reformation by self-government under the authority of the Spirit, we have too often hid under a bushel that new light from the Scriptures which John Robinson greeted from afar?

The fruits of this century of enlightening

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

scholarship can be found stored up in the Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias. But do the people read them? Our divinity faculties know them. But are the faculties brought into touch with the teaching body of the churches? In a few exceptional cases they are. Here and there you find a church with a teaching ministry, trained and salaried, a church school competently organized, and if *very* favorably located, perhaps even linked up with the university or divinity school. But such cases are rare and sporadic. They are the merest samples. We need a garment for our nakedness, and need it soon.

It is the specific, unavoidable task of the Christian university, above all of such institutions as the Yale Divinity School, the servant of the churches, to prove to them and to the world that modernism is not necessarily irreligious, that the Reformers were right in their dependence on the Scriptures as interpreted by individual judgment under the guidance of the Spirit, that the Puritan forefathers were right in claiming alliance with the university, and the founders of the great Republic were right in committing to the Church the defense of its own freedom

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

through general education and enlightenment in things pertaining to God. It is the task of our scholars to prove that Christianity in the light of modern discovery proves something greater than that which it was conceived to be a hundred years ago. And this task of the divinity school has its complement in the duty of the pastor and teacher. It is for you, the graduates, to meet the blind, pathetic protest of the Fundamentalist with a modernism that works; to build up, while opportunity still lingers, a system of religious education worthy of our principles and our inheritance, and commanding the respect of the scholarly world. In this ministry of teaching there should be systematic coordination between church and university, not exceptional, occasional, incidental, but continuous, general and systematic.

You must of course expect opposition. Who ever did a thoroughly good and important work without it? In our ordaining councils for fifty years we have been generous in the extreme to the kind of applicant who was considered safe, and meant well, and severe on the man who had intellectual vigor, independence, and capacity. Let us see whether it be

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

not safer to cease this watering down of the ministry in view of the need for teaching. For a paid superintendent of the Sunday school under a minister who himself is ignorant and incapable is likely to make things worse than before. Let us meet the inertia of prejudice and ignorance with better knowledge. We shall encounter a press and public whose idea of what Christianity means is based on Billy Sunday and the caricatures of the newspaper and the novelist. Press and public take the view they might be expected to take when there is no adequate system of public instruction under joint direction of the churches and the divinity schools. You will meet the strongest opposition of all from the practical producers, the manufacturers of converts along the time-honored, stereotyped plan, supposed to be good for at least another decade. There is reason to doubt its continued efficacy, and the maintenance of the quality of its product. But there is no doubt whatever that the publishers of Sunday school lesson leaves hate improvements in the method just as cordially as other practical producers. The same applies to other religious vested interests. The scribe well instructed unto the king-

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

dom of heaven brings out of his treasure things new as well as old. The Lord knows we have been very zealous about the old. Perhaps it is time for bringing out a few things that are new, and holding fast that which proves itself good.

Perhaps even a lecturer may be permitted to take a text if he take it not in vain to flirt with, but to honor it and respect it and to stick to it. Paul, in speaking of the teaching ministry, applies to his fellow laborers the figure of the threshing ox. The synagogue name for the teacher and preacher is in fact *darshan*, literally the "treader out." The apostle, pleading for fair treatment of those who "labor in the word and in teaching," compares them to the patient animals who on Syrian threshing-floors spend the long summer day plodding their tedious way over the piled up sheaves, that from the kernels thus beaten off the people may be fed. Fancifully, perhaps half-humorously, he applies to them the humane statute of Moses: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." At the policy of a starvation wage made specially applicable to ministers and teachers my own soul revolts for its injustice

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

as much as my mind deplores the folly of it in face of conditions as they are. But there is another kind of muzzling certainly not less disastrous to the public welfare and harder for the true teacher to bear, a kind for which primary responsibility rests rather with a timid and reactionary leadership in the Church than with the public at large. This kind of muzzling is in line with that conception of education which regards it as the impartation bit by bit of a fixed deposit of unchangeable dogma, the conception which gives a sinister connotation to the term "catechetical," and makes the red-blooded American, even if a Romanist in church affiliation, rebel at the imposition of the parochial school. Too often we have thought of our stock of gospel grain as if it were only bread for the eater, and must not also provide seed for the sower. We have forgotten the perpetually recurrent necessity for a new and larger crop, grown from seed still living and vital. We have followed afar off—very far off—the medieval catechist's attempt to discipline the character against the terrors of martyrdom and the seductions of the flesh, and we have forgotten the apostolic ideal, "Howbeit in malice be ye

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

babes, but in understanding full-grown men.” We have thought in education (heaven save the mark!) to keep the people “babes in understanding” by a perpetual diet of well-diluted milk, and have thought that thus they would be “no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error.” We are beginning to be undeceived.

Friends, fellow alumni of this historic School, the Fundamentalist has risen to a great emergency. He is doing his narrow best. In the intellectual field he is fighting a losing battle against overwhelming odds. But as Christians of ampler view and opportunity it is not our part to stand by and see him draw down upon himself and upon the cause he champions according to his lights the contempt and ridicule of the cultured world. For us there is a better way than silence and inaction. Continue the great traditions of this School. Fulfill its generous service to the churches. Make its contribution in the new century greater than in the last. The call of the times is to the teaching ministry, whether at home or in the foreign field. The coming

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

decades are big with portent for good or ill. We may have a great and free and growing Christianity advancing along the lines blazed out by the Reformers, a Christianity that shall inform and vitalize a reconstructed civilization; or we may have timidity and reaction, with the inevitable triumph of materialism, sensuality and irreligion. The task is tremendous. It is complicated by the well-meant efforts of some who mistake bigotry for orthodoxy and the clamor of majorities for the voice of God. Be yours that wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable and easy to be entreated. This wisdom comes to the humble, teachable and open mind. It is not given to those that have nothing to learn.

Gentlemen of the alumni, we who are now the "Old Faculty" salute you. Fifty years ago today those whom we remember as the "Old Faculty" took over from their predecessors of the first days an institution reconstructed in buildings and endowment, but cherishing as their chief treasure the great traditions inherited through the succession of more than one hundred and seventy years. They made of it a great school of training for

The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

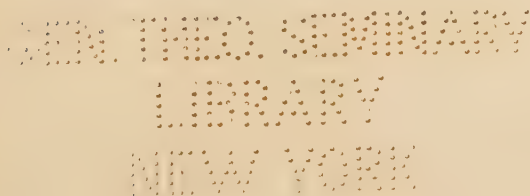
the New England ministry. Twelve years ago we laid the foundations for a larger development. New endowments have come. Above all, the new curriculum itself has proved a success. The students and teachers are here. We have the cooperation of the University for the larger task. We believe that there is no place of training in the world where a man can be better prepared than here for service in the pastorate, the mission field, religious education, social philanthropy, or research in the history and philosophy of religion. Today we are gathered, Faculty, alumni, students and friends, to give thanks to God who has blest this enterprise with assured success. The ship is now launched on wider seas. New vistas of larger service open before us. We have the cooperation of students and University. We call for that of the churches and the alumni. With that no task is too great. We can face the new century with hope and faith. If my forecast of its problem of most immediate urgency is correct, it will be solved by the consecration of men of religion in the Church and men of vision in the University. Light and Truth shall be our guides. Let them lead us, let them bring us to God's holy hill!

Notes

¹ In his recent essay on St. Paul, Dean Inge well says: "There has been no religious revival within Christianity that has not been on one side at least a return to St. Paul. The reason, put shortly, is that St. Paul understood what most Christians never realize, namely, that the Gospel of Christ is not *a* religion, but religion itself, in its most universal and deepest significance."

² Catholic and Protestant publishers ran a close race in claims to infallibility. The claim of the Elzevirs (let no ribald anti-Semite suggest that there is any Hebrew flavor in such a name as Abraham El-zevir) sounds very like an answer to that made just forty-four years before by Pope Sixtus V in the decree "Aeternus ille" on behalf of his own edition of the Vulgate text approved by the Council of Trent. The decree required that this text should be "received and held as true, legitimate, authentic and unquestioned." Unfortunately Sixtus' text turned out to be so full of errors that only three years after its appearance in 1589 his successor, Clement VIII, was obliged hastily to get out a new edition issued in the name of the defunct Sixtus, in which the blame for the errors was thrown on "the printers" (though Sixtus himself had corrected the proofs). Cardinal Bellarmine was the inventor of this ingenious method of making the printer's devil save the face of the Church. But Protestant infallibility fared no better.

Recent personal experience gives the most convincing evidence of how the principle of the "immutability of dogma" works out practically in the publishing business. Four months ago I submitted a booklet to a well-known firm of publishers.



The Teaching Ministry for Tomorrow

The subject was Christ's method in the use of Scripture. The manuscript was returned with the frank statement that it could not be accepted because it "directly challenged" the views of the Rev. R. A. Torrey, whose works, the writers added, they were publishing together with those of "other Fundamentalists." To rejection on this ground there could of course be no objection, though I was glad to be assured upon enquiry that they had found "not the remotest approach" to unfairness or discourtesy in my utterances. But the curious thing is that these same publishers, in the same letter in which they refused to print a book on this ground alone, volunteered the statement that they "aimed to present both sides in religious controversy, and wished to be considered an open forum of opinion"!

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